

USAID

The United States Agency for International Development



CPL. MATTHEW ROBERSON/U.S. MARINE CORPS.

Rebuilding Afghanistan

OUR CURRENT EFFORTS IN A WAR-TORN COUNTRY



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Rebuilding Afghanistan

Afghanistan presents one of the most difficult humanitarian and development challenges the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has ever faced. Years of civil war, com-

[below] The former Coca-Cola bottling plant in Kabul's western neighborhood of Karte Char. This and surrounding areas were severely damaged in fighting between Mujahideen factions in the early 1990s.



Chris Brown/USAID

pounded by the Taliban rule and the worst drought in memory, have devastated the country. Approximately half the country lives in absolute poverty. Malnutrition is widespread. Fifty percent of the people are unemployed—70 percent are illiterate. Virtually all the country's institutions and much of its infrastructure have been destroyed.

Historic efforts have been made during the Taliban regime and the subsequent war against terrorism to deliver critically needed assistance to the Afghan people. Even before the events of last fall, Afghanistan was the United States' top recipient of humanitarian aid, receiving \$174 million in fiscal year 2001 before September 11.

During the last several months, the United States has played a leading role in meeting the Afghans' immediate needs for food, water, shelter and medicine. The delivery of unprece-

dent amounts of food in record time by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), with funding from USAID, has greatly reduced the loss of life. The majority of this wheat, oil and lentils came from the United States and has fed more than six million men women and children.

The United States has pledged nearly \$300 million in this fiscal year alone for Afghan relief and reconstruction. Of this sum, \$167 million is managed by USAID. With the demise of the Taliban and the establishment of the new Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) in December 2001, Afghanistan can begin to focus on recovery and reconstruction, even as the drought continues.

To that end, USAID is working with local communities to begin to rehabilitate key infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, health clinics, schools, government buildings, and markets, as well as the water and sanitation systems in provincial capitals. Through innovative cash-for-work and food-for-work programs, Afghans are hired to complete the necessary work, thus stimulating the local economy.

While acknowledging that emergency relief efforts are still urgently required, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios outlines four goals for reconstruction: 1) Restoring food security through agriculture and increasing family income; 2) Expanding education and health services; 3) Stabilizing the country through the integration of ex-combatants (job creation), anti-narcotics, and infrastructure repair; and 4) Building the legitimacy and capacity of the AIA.

USAID is working with the AIA, humanitarian organizations and the rest of the international community, to begin the process of building a safe, stable society that meets the needs of its people. ■



Judy Benjamin/USAID

[left] Afghan girls release white doves during a special ceremony dedicated to women on International Women's Day, March 8, 2002.



Rehabilitating Agriculture

Traditionally, agriculture is the largest and most important sector of the economy in Afghanistan. War conditions, coupled with the region's worst drought in memory have devastated the country's

food production capabilities and depleted critical seed stocks. Although the drought will more than likely continue in Afghanistan for at least the next 12 to 18 months, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to help for the long term.

>> Agriculture is the way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people, and USAID is helping farmers re-establish production and become more profitable and efficient. This effort includes rehabilitating the irrigation system and providing tools, agricultural equipment, 15,000 tons of fertilizer, livestock vaccines and 7,000 tons of seed for spring planting, which will yield 125,000 metric tons of food. Over the next two years, USAID will provide a total of 48,000 metric tons of seed, yielding 772,000 metric tons of food.

>> Experts also are training Afghan farmers in planting methods, crop protection, and animal husbandry. USAID is funding Mercy Corps International to plant fruit-tree nurseries, distribute saplings and establish veterinary field units.

>> Lack of water is the most critical constraint to reviving Afghanistan's agriculture. USAID is funding the drilling of wells, the reconstruction of local irrigation systems, and the rehabilitation of the water supply. USAID's implementing partner, FOCUS, is installing wells throughout the Balkh and Baghlan Provinces and will construct piped water systems in Bamiyan Province. Other organizations are rehabilitating canals and reservoirs and constructing erosion barriers. USAID will fund a nationwide water-resource assessment to better understand and respond to the effects of four years of drought. ■



An Afghan examines a parched vineyard.

CPL. MATTHEW ROBERSON/U.S. MARINE CORPS.



Education

Education is a key building block to a stable and economically self-sufficient society. In general, improvements in women's education have contributed the most by far to the total decline in child

civics and social studies for grades one through 12. More than 5 million books were delivered by UNICEF under the AIA's Back-to-School Program in time for opening day, March 23. Nearly 5 million more will be delivered in upcoming weeks. The textbooks are printed in the Afghan languages of Pashtu and Dari and are accompanied by teachers' kits and other school supplies.

» USAID is funding 20 teams of five teacher trainers to conduct four-week training sessions with 4,000 educators. Half of the trainers and half of the educators are women.

» As part of its food-for-education program, the World Food Program (WFP), with USAID support, is providing nutritious school meals to schoolchildren in several districts of Badakhshan Province, in northeastern Afghanistan, and is expanding nationwide to reach 1 million children. In this program, girls receive five liters of vegetable oil every month as an extra incentive for regular school attendance. The program reduces dropout rates, increases school attendance, and encourages families to send girls to school.

WFP is also starting food-for-work projects to rehabilitate approximately 600 schools and enable women-run bakeries to provide bread to the pupils. About 50,000 teachers are receiving monthly food packages to supplement their income, through a food-for-civil-servants program introduced across the country. This program is part of USAID's \$100 million comprehensive support to WFP's efforts in Afghanistan.

» Through a \$6.5 million grant to the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is editing and printing nearly 10 million textbooks for science, math, reading,

» A USAID-funded program is encouraging Afghan women and girls to read by hosting reading classes and improving the country's libraries. USAID is funding the training of library staff and supplying books. ■

malnutrition. The mortality rates of children born to mothers possessing a secondary education are nearly 36 percent lower than those of children born to mothers who have only attended primary school.

During the Taliban regime, Afghan girls were banned from the classroom. In 1999, an estimated 32 percent of Afghanistan's 4.4 million

children were enrolled. Ninety-two percent of the country's girls did not attend school. Many of Afghanistan's 3,600 schools were damaged or destroyed by decades of conflict and lack basic supplies.

For the first time in years, girls have the opportunity to obtain an education. Female teachers, once shunned from the classroom—and society—have returned too. The Afghan Interim Authority (AIA), the U.S. government, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and many humanitarian organizations are working together to bring at least 1.5 million Afghan children and 60,000 teachers "back to school" with textbooks, school supplies and training materials in hand.



Cpl. Matthew Roberson/U.S. Marine Corps.

For the first time in years, Afghan girls have the opportunity to gain an education. Most communities in Afghanistan conduct the school year from late March through December in deference to the cold winters. USAID is working with the Afghan Interim Authority and the United Nations to ensure that students have textbooks, nourishing meals and functional schools.



Improving Health

One of every four Afghan children dies before the age of 5. This child mortality rate is among the highest in the world. Afghanistan's average life expectancy is 46 years. There is currently one physician

for every 50,000 people. An estimated 40 percent of the Afghan population has no access to primary health care services.

Vaccination rates for many preventable diseases among the country's 11 million children have fallen to dangerously low levels in recent years. Less than half of the country's children have been vaccinated against measles—a disease that kills an average of 35,000 Afghan children each year.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is spending \$9.7 million to improve the basic health and

nutrition of Afghans, particularly women, children and refugees. It is bringing basic health services and health education to under-served communities, focusing on hygiene, water and sanitation; immunizations; infectious diseases; as well as care for pregnant mothers and newborns.

» USAID is funding the vaccination of more than 2 million children against measles as part of a joint UNICEF/World Health Organization measles campaign. These children are also receiving vitamin A capsules that will enhance their chance of survival from childhood illnesses.

» It is granting an additional \$1 million from the Leahy War Victims Fund to support the social and economic rehabilitation and integration of land mine victims and other disabled people. These funds also will provide training and specialized technical expertise to Afghan orthopedic technologists.

» USAID is funding a polio eradication campaign, expanding maternal and child health services, training and equipping community health care workers, supporting Afghanistan's Ministry of Health and working to establish a health surveillance system to meet the health care needs of the Afghan people.

» Since October 2000, USAID has contributed more \$8.3 million to address the water and sanitation needs of Afghanistan's people. This includes funding the drilling of wells and rehabilitation of water sources, the installation of pipelines and the construction of hand pumps and pit latrines. Afghans have received water purification tablets, soap, and drinking water as well as education about safe hygiene practices, sanitation and waste disposal. ■



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Infrastructure

Afghanistan has suffered immense physical destruction. Returning Afghan refugees are likely to find their homes or businesses reduced to piles of rubble and crumbling foundations. The Afghan Interim

Authority (AIA), anxious to start providing goods and services to its citizens, is hampered by a basic lack of office space from which to operate. Civil society, media and local government likewise cannot function without adequate infrastructure.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is responding to this urgent need by launching 27 medium- and small-scale reconstruction projects worth \$7 million in Afghanistan. These projects enable

the initiation of critical services, such as education, transport and the provision of clean water. They also provide Afghans with tangible proof that a new phase in Afghanistan's history—characterized by a responsive government—has begun.

» USAID is providing nine grants totaling \$5,654,707 for spot reconstruction of critical infrastructure, including roads, clinics, mills, canals, markets and schools. Many of these projects, spread throughout Afghanistan, use cash-for-work and food-for-work incentives to employ local labor and thus stimulate the local economy.

[left] In partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Public Works and ACTED, USAID funded the rehabilitation of the Salang Tunnel and the creation of an innovative traffic control system.

[below] One of 10 classrooms USAID is rehabilitating in the Kabul Teacher Training College.

» USAID is working with the Ministry of Education and the International Organization of Migration to reconstruct schools and universities. These include a \$140,000 project to rebuild the Kabul Teacher Training College. In addition, USAID is reconstructing Bamian University and rehabilitating three schools in Kabul and one in Mazar-e-Sharif.

» USAID is providing infrastructure and equipment for key ministries of the AIA, including the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

» USAID is rehabilitating three hospitals, one in Kandahar and two in Kabul. The Kandahar hospital, which is the primary health facility for Kandahar and three neighboring provinces, was damaged during recent fighting.

» Afghanistan's Ministry of Irrigation is unable to function with its antiquated equipment, and this is jeopardizing the availability of drinking water. With USAID funding, the Ministry will receive critical drilling equipment. Water sources are being rehabilitated in southwestern Baglan and northeastern Bamiyan as well.

» USAID, through the French humanitarian organization, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), rehabilitated the Salang Tunnel thus opening a major supply route, allowing greater quantities of goods, services and humanitarian aid to flow more quickly from commercial centers to Afghan populations. The re-opening of the tunnel has shortened the trip between Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif by as much as 14 hours. Some 100 to 300 vehicles per day are now using the tunnel.

» As part of its commitment to jumpstart mass media in Afghanistan, USAID is providing funding to rehabilitate a journalist-training center which will train up to 500 local journalists over the next few years. In addition, USAID is rehabilitating an independent media center, which will house production facilities for a daily independent newspaper and provide a meeting space for local journalists. ■



Jeanne Pryor/USAID



Jeanne Pryor/USAID



Creating Jobs

A healthy economy is a key foundation for a stable society. USAID is building Afghanistan's economy by creating jobs that enable Afghans to support their families and meet their country's most urgent needs.

>> In fiscal years 2001 and 2002, USAID has provided more than \$25 million in support of humanitarian assistance projects with a cash-for-work or food-for-work component. Local Afghans receive cash or food payments

for providing services that benefit entire communities, such as repairing infrastructure.

>> Through a \$736,544 grant to Shelter for Life, Afghans have been hired to repair some of the worst portions of a road connecting Kunduz and Takhar provinces in the northeast.

>> USAID has provided \$700,000 to help Afghans begin small-scale income generation activities at the village level, such as growing kitchen gardens, embroidering, producing cheese and yogurt, and crafting shoes.

>> USAID is working with the non-governmental organization, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) to support the establishment of a women's center on the Shomali Plains. The center provides basic education, health instruction, and training for income-generation projects such as making clothing and quilts for distribution to hospitals, orphanages, schools and families. ACTED is opening four more centers in Kabul, Pul-e-Khumri, Maimaneh, and Taloqan which will benefit more than 5,000 women. ■

USAID is employing 3,200 Afghan widows to sew quilts and clothing as part of an income-generation project.



JEAN PRYOR/USAID



Empowering Women



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Afghan women enjoyed a long history of freedom and education before the Taliban assumed power in 1996. Women were deans of universities, ministers and members of the country's highest

legislative body. During the Taliban regime, Afghan women were shunned from public life, prohibited from working outside the home, and punished for showing their faces. Education, both traditional and vocational, was forbidden. The rates of depression and trauma-related illnesses among women living under Taliban rule were among the highest in the world.

A great number of highly educated, skilled women fled the country during the last decade. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is committed to helping the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA) build a nation where women have the freedom and the resources to pursue an education and a livelihood within their own country. It is hoped that these efforts will encourage Afghan expatriate women to return home to help transform their nation.

The situation of women in Afghanistan

has improved markedly; however much work remains to be done. Through U.S. government and international community support of the AIA and the humanitarian community, many girls are returning to school with textbooks in hand. Women are returning to the university and have a newly rehabilitated dormitory in which to live and study. Many women now have access to health clinics and are being trained to meet the health and nutritional needs of their families.

USAID is specifically giving the Afghan women the education, skills and tools they need to obtain jobs, support their families and integrate into the political and public life of this new stage in Afghanistan's history.

» The World Food Program (WFP), with funding from USAID, is operating bakeries which employ Afghan widows, and at the same time, provide heavily subsidized bread

to Afghanistan's urban poor—particularly women and children. At least 250,000 people will be assisted this year. During the Taliban era, the bakeries were one of the few places in the country where women could work. With support from the USAID, the WFP is working to expand this innovative program to other provinces in the country.

» USAID, through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is rehabilitating the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs building complex and providing support for technical advisors to assist the Ministry in establishing operations and developing programs.

» USAID and IOM are rehabilitating the offices of Ariana, a national women's non-governmental organization. Ariana is based in Kabul and provides educational and vocational courses to women and girls. The grant is providing training supplies and equipment and is increasing the organization's ability to provide training and educational courses.

» The USAID-funded Afghan Women's Network (AWN) is providing returning refugees with job skills, including managerial training, in order to enhance women's abilities to achieve economic independence. The non-political, non-profit organization aims to promote solidarity and cooperation amongst Afghan women, and to strengthen their capacity to enhance their self-reliance and attain their rights. AWN is also training women to participate in the *loya jirga*, the emerging political process.

In addition to these specific initiatives, USAID's entire reconstruction program for Afghanistan emphasizes women's participation and benefit. For example, teacher training and textbook distribution programs benefit women teachers and girls' schools, among others. USAID's health program focuses particularly on maternal and child health issues. ■



Restoring Media

Afghanistan is a radio culture. Well before the civil war began in 1978-79, Afghans listened to radio—especially music—in their villages as a primary form of entertainment. Under the Taliban

regime, people were forbidden from listening to music. News and information was tightly controlled and communities were isolated.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is working with the Afghan Interim Authority, Voice of America (VOA) and others to build a communications network that will help to inform and unite Afghanistan's people and thus contribute to a stable society.

>> USAID and the International Organization for Migration distributed 30,000 radios and launched the Humanitarian Emergency Afghan Radio Project to provide news and information concerning food distribution, humanitarian aid and security. Daily bulletins produced in the local languages of Pashtu and Dari are distributed to a growing network of local radio stations in Afghanistan and are aired on VOA and other international broadcasters in the region, such as the British Broadcasting Company.

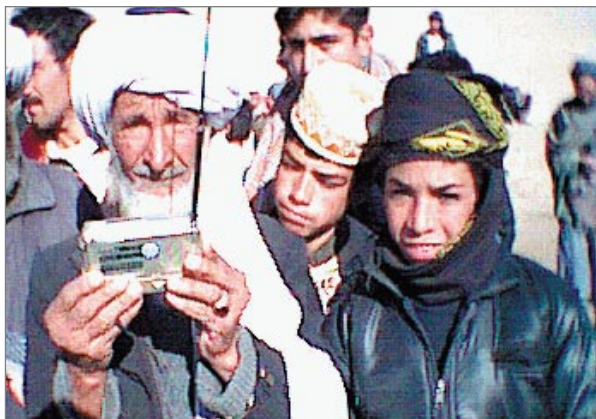
>> USAID is spending \$1 million through Internews to train and equip local Afghan journalists to report on political, economic and social issues. Funds will provide much-needed resources to help start local newspapers, radio and television stations, and Internet providers, as well as support journalist associations and freedom of expression organizations throughout Afghanistan.

>> USAID is providing funds to VOA for the salaries of 10 Dari- and Pashtu-speaking service correspondents to expand news coverage for the VOA inside Afghanistan. ■



TOM

Afghans hold USAID-supplied radios that allow them to hear news and bulletins concerning food distribution, humanitarian aid and security.



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